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UNCLAS ASUNCION 000742

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/BSC, GTIP

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: PARAGUAY ON TIP REPORT, NEXT STEPS

REF: STATE 97687

1. On 6/2, Polcouns shared with Julio Peralta, the MFA's Director of International Organizations, an advance copy of the 2005 TIP report on Paraguay. Drawing from reftel points, Polcouns noted significant progress Paraguay had made in combating TIP particularly with regard to successful prosecution of traffickers, greater coordination and collaboration among key players, and creation of a rehabilitation center. Paraguay needed to do more to step up prosecutions, increase public awareness, and improve services for victims. Peralta, as chair of an interagency coordination group on TIP, was central to GOP efforts to improve Paraguay's record on combating this problem. He appreciated the report's recognition of the progress Paraguay had made and was pleased with the decision to remove Paraguay from the Watch List.

2. On 6/8, Paraguay will inaugurate a Rehabilitation Center for victims of trafficking. The center will be staffed by psychologists, sociologists, and lawyers dedicated to helping TIP victims recover from their traumatic experiences and reintegrate into society. It will also sponsor workshops to raise the awareness of TIP and how to deal with the problem in local communities. The U.S. has provided approximately USD 30,000 to prepare the facility for use and procure computers, furniture, and other equipment and materials.

3. In a 5/31 discussion with Nancy Ortega, the Center's Director, on preparations to open the center, Polcouns stressed the importance the U.S. placed on prevention of trafficking and prosecution of traffickers as necessary complementary measures to protection of victims. The Women's Ministry (MOW) is involved in efforts to repatriate 29 Paraguayans from Encarnacion, Paraguay discovered recently working in a brothel in Cordoba, Argentina. All traveled willingly to Argentina crossing the border without inspection. However, while some traveled knowing they would work as prostitutes; many were misled and did not learn what they were getting into until they arrived in Cordoba. Polcouns drew attention to the need for Paraguay to center prevention efforts in vulnerable communities such as Encarnacion and to investigate and prosecute aggressively traffickers implicated in this particular case.

4. Ortega described MOW efforts to develop a publicity campaign with U.S. funds consisting of flyers, posters and radio and newspaper spots carefully targeted at vulnerable communities. She agreed prosecution of traffickers was key to addressing the problem of impunity. She noted that many of the women from Encarnacion do not want to press charges for fear of reprisals. However, she indicated at least one woman's family had expressed interest in discussing with prosecutors the possibility of pressing charges. Post will report septel as more information on this case becomes available upon return of the women to Paraguay.

KEANE